The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

MARCH 1948

Lenten Number

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CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

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Sermon Illustrations

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

'The King of Love'

You may recall Ibsen's great play which is based on the life of Julian in the fourth century. This apostate emperor persecuted the Christians in an effort to establish the mythical gods of Greece and Rome. However, instead of dethroning the Galilean in the minds and hearts of the growing Christian community, he was confronted at every step with the rather baffling power of Jesus. He finally is compelled to say: "And what does the conqueror win? Is it worth while to conquer? What has the Macedonian Alexander, what has Julius Caesar won? Greeks and Romans talk of their renown with cold admiration—while the other, the Galilean, the carpenter's son, sits enthroned as the king of love in the warm, believing hearts of men." And then he adds: "He who is to rule over the minds, over the wills of men. It is in this way that your Jesus of Nazareth bars my way and contests my power."—*Richard P. Mallery, First Church of Kew Gardens, New York.*

The One Hope in a Desperate World

There is one message I would like to pass on to *Pulpit* readers. It becomes more meaningful each day as one lives over here amid the austerity and amazing hope of the British people, next to a suffering Europe. The death of John G. Winant had a most profound effect upon the people of this land. He had endeared himself to them during the war as few of our diplomats have been able to do. The great *Manchester Guardian* closed a powerful editorial on Winant with these words: "It is a sad commentary on our postwar world that John Winant could not bear to live in it."

How often those of us who think seriously and who know at first hand the desperateness of this postwar world feel as Winant must have felt! We see our earth hurtling toward anything but peace and concord, and we feel that our own actions may be helping toward that end. Yet we know that we dare not let that overbearing feeling get us down as it did Mr. Winant. For we carry in our hearts the hope of the Christian gospel. We know that there have been other midnights for mankind, every bit as dark as this one, and we are confident that whatever happens we can never be separated from "the love of God in Christ Jesus."—*Edward J. Vorba, graduate student, University of Manchester, Eng.*

Is Christ Seen in Us?

Some years ago a young American went out to China as a new missionary. When he arrived he was shown to his quarters and his parish was defined. He began his first day of teaching by telling the story of Christ in much the same way as a mother might tell it to her child for the first time. He explained that this Master of whom he spoke is the shepherd of our souls, and that he died for sinful humanity. When the sermon was finished an old gentleman rushed to the missionary and said that he had once known the man about whom the sermon had told. It was puzzling indeed. To please the old man the missionary listened through the story. At the close of the story the old man beckoned the missionary to a near-by burying ground. There on a stone was inscribed a good American name, and after it the letters M. D. Below the name were the words: "Medical missionary to China and victim of the great plague."

The old man had indeed seen the Master of whom the missionary had told: had seen him in the person of the physician who had proved a true disciple of his in ministering to the suffering people.—*Gerald D. Kaufman, Congregational Church, Pawtucket, R. I.*

A Genuine Conversion

Alice Elizabeth Davis is editor of *Henry George News,* an important publication in the field of economics and sociology. She writes with conviction about her new discovery of religion. She finds that the fear of the Lord does not mean a cringing, cowardly subservience, but "living one's life by God's ways"—living in such a way that God's perfect timing, as she calls it, may operate uninhibited. This precious pearl of personal religion was possessed by changing nothing but a thought. "Nothing else changed," she claims. "This is the first year I have felt strong enough in my religion to talk freely about it—even to agnostic and realistic people. To me this way of living surpasses anything one could dream of."—*Arnold A. Brown, Community Church, Durham, N. H.*

When Life Goes Stale

When Tolstoy, the Russian novelist, was about fifty years old, he found life beginning to go stale for him, and he spent two years working on religious questions to see if there was enough meaning in life to go on living. For a time the picture was dark, and he tells us that he had to hide a rope to keep from hanging himself from the rafters of his room. His plight was desperate. Then the turning point came. He was walking alone in the woods, debating with himself about belief in God and wondering why he had ever come by the idea of God in the first place. He noticed that every time the thought of God came to him, there came also an uprush of vital energy within him, and for that moment life took on meaning and beauty for him. The realization came: "Why do I look further? He is there: he, without whom one cannot live. To acknowledge God and to live are one and the same thing. God is what life is. Well, then! live; seek God. There will be no life without him!"—*Fredric P. Woods, Birdville Methodist Church, Ft. Worth, Texas.*

'Chain Reactions' of Love

We know about the contrast between the great strides of mankind's advance in scientific knowledge and the snail-like pace of moral and spiritual advance. Men are asking therefore whether there can be any hope of love subduing the world before an atomic war reduces our planet to ashes. The scientists have described a "chain reaction," a progressive disintegration of atoms from one element to another which might some day dissolve the whole earth. But may not this idea suggest another outcome to men of faith? If God has ordained that a chain reaction of atoms is possible, may he not ordain also that the power of love may produce a chain reaction? If enough Christians were to believe in this possibility, and work and pray for it, might there not be a melting of human hearts and a conversion of human ways to the way of Christ in one great world-redeeming event? Which is better, to live in fear of the first type of chain reaction, or in faith in the second?—*Frederick A. Meyer, Congregational Church, Rockville Centre, N. Y.*

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

SO Gandhi's life on earth has come to its end, not by his voluntary "fasting unto death" as seemed likely many times during his amazing career, but at the hands of a fellow Hindu whose darkened mind was obsessed with resentment at the results of the Mahatma's latest offer of self-sacrifice to bring peace to India. This madman could not endure to see a reconciliation of Hindus and Moslems at such cost as the Mahatma laid upon his own people. Gandhi asked nothing from the Moslems, everything from the Hindus. They were to invite the Moslem refugees to return from Pakistan to India, to restore to them without discrimination the social parity which existed before communal strife led to the partition of India and to pay the huge sum of $166,000,000, held in India but belonging to Moslems, to its owners. All this was done or agreed to. The assassin represented an organized junta of resistance to this otherworldly "folly." There is something so sublime about Gandhi's life that the mind of the West—even the Christian mind—cannot easily come to terms with it. He lived in and revealed the same dimension of reality as that in which Jesus lived and which his cross forever illuminated. There can be no doubt that Gandhi caught his vision of this world of reality from his reading of the New Testament and his love of Him who walks through all its pages. The Hindu wrappings in which he clothed his "Christian" faith must not blind us to its essential Christian substance. Perhaps here, in the life of this one man, we have a prophecy of the way Christ is to win all mankind unto himself.

Gandhi is Killed

The Book of the Month

IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES. *By Richard M. Weaver. University of Chicago Press, $2.75.*

WE ALL know that something is the matter with this civilization of ours, something deep down at the bottom of it. But what is it? Mr. Weaver comes forward with a diagnosis. He says the trouble comes from a wrong way of thinking. The whole of modern life, he declares, is shot through with a single wrong idea. This idea has proliferated other ideas akin to itself and produced attitudes, tastes and behavior which reflect our moral decadence. What is this idea? It is the idea that truth and reality inhere in immediate sense experience, denies the reality of the transcendental and leaves man immersed in his own sensations. Philosophically, the book is a frontal attack on modern empiricism, pragmatism and naturalism. These are no longer merely academic ways of thinking but have infiltrated into and now permeate the mass mind. It is with the consequences of this false view of truth and reality that the book is concerned. Relentlessly the author exposes its effects in the acceptance of science as an adequate revealer of truth, in the contemporary obsession with immediacy as revealed in art, the movies, the radio and the press, in the degradation of labor from a vocation to a commodity, in the separation of education from religion, in the absence of standards for judging right and wrong, and many other consequences. The author deliberately refrains from the use of religious terminology, but the profound bearing of his treatment upon religion is obvious. It is particularly significant that Mr. Weaver is a teacher in the University of Chicago where the definitive form of the philosophy whose consequences he pitilessly exposes was cradled.

A Thought for the Month

EVERY ACT of faith involves a hazard. Faith is not mere belief of evidence. It is putting to the test of conduct a course of living for which no absolute proof can be found short of the actual experience of living that way. It is a hazard always. The question of prayer, for example, is not solved by standing outside and discussing it, but only by standing inside and practicing it. The question of the existence of God is finally solved by those who live as if God did indeed exist. It is not the mighty in intellect, but the pure in heart who see him. So with our response to Christ. Our faith in him does not depend upon certain credentials which are supposed to attest his divinity, but upon our capacity to perceive the moral grandeur of his person. Men asked him once to show the credentials of his authority. He answered with a counter-question which brought out their incompetence to read his credentials even if he should present them. He told Pilate that those who were "of the truth" would hear his voice. Though one may be convinced that Jesus fulfilled ancient prophecies and wrought supernatural miracles and himself rose from the dead, the belief of all this would not constitute faith unless one discerns his moral authority and yields obedience to it. Living thus by faith, we shall find "evidence" enough as we go along. "We must wager," as Pascal said long ago. And Donald Hankey said that faith is just "betting your life that there is a God." It is also betting your life that in Jesus Christ we have the final revelation of the character of the God to whom our lives are committed.

The Risk of Faith

Charles Clayton Morrison

The Darkness at the Cross

By HERBERT BEECHER HUDNUT

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. Matthew 27:45.

IN FRANCE, one often sees along the road a wayside shrine, a little niche in a wall with a crucifix and perhaps a stone seat or a fountain below. Here the wearied traveler rests his burden and kneels in prayer. Here he gains a sight of Heaven. Here the dust of the road is washed away by the same Savior who took a towel and girt himself and ministered to tired, wrangling disciples centuries ago in an Upper Room in Jerusalem. Here is the renewal of quietness and confidence which Jesus promised when he said, "Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile. . . . Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Good Friday is such a wayside shrine for all of us. We walk along the Via Dolorosa where Jesus was taken by the soldiers. At the foot of his cross we rest from the burden and heat of the day. We hear the last words of the Crucified which are enshrined forever in the memory of his church: "Father, forgive. . . . It is finished." And then we speak softly: "It was for us he suffered and died . . . for us he endured the cruel torment . . . for us the crown of thorns, the nails, the thirst." Ah! God in Heaven! Can any man be untouched by his sacrifice or be indifferent to his suffering for us and for our sins?

THE DARKNESS OF MAN'S SIN

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." *There was the darkness of sin* enshrouding the Savior's cross, man-made sin, black as the night, dark and terrible as the evil deeds of passion, and fearsome as the last judgment of the wicked. Sin has been defined as any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God. Susannah Wesley, sainted mother of John and Charles, wrote this to her sons: "Whatever mars the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes the relish off spiritual things, that thing is sin for you, no matter how innocent it may be in itself or for someone else."

Definitions pale before the awful reality of sin. It is as one sees it in dreadful operation, as one watches it wreak its vengeance upon a loved one, as one views its consequences and considers its penalties, that it stands revealed as something we must hate with intense loathing, and avoid with the same strength that the Master displayed when he conquered the temptations in the wilderness. The darkness at the cross was the darkness of man's sin—its only relief the sinlessness of the victim. There was Pilate in the murky background with his unclean hands, condemning because Jesus threatened his temporal power. There was the religious hierarchy joined in an unreasonable prejudice against a native prophet, refusing to honor him in their assemblies, dishonoring him by his death. There were the soldiers in drunken revelry, gambling for his seamless robe. There was the populace—fickle; shouting, "Hosanna!" at his triumphal entry into their city; shouting the demand, "Crucify him!" as he left their city bearing a heavy cross a few days later. And there were the disciples in their agony of despair, deserting him whom they loved the most. In that darkness, "there was a Man on the Cross, with curses ringing in his ears and the vision of a redeemed humanity in his dying eyes."

THE NEW CRUCIFIXION

It would seem that men should have learned the final lesson from that experience, and that they would never crucify the Son of Man again; yet generation after generation the record of man's misdeeds cries aloud to Heaven, and the darkness of his sinning deepens in the lowering night. What great darkness there is in our world today! Isaiah could well speak again for us: "Woe is me, for I am undone—I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips!" The darkness at the cross and the darkness of the present spring from the same source—man's willful wickedness. Today, as at Golgotha, there is the sin of cruelty, obscuring man's intelligence, obstructing his attempts to bring his vision of a better world into focus. It spreads as a slow stain over the mind of man, causing him to be bloodthirsty, hardened to crime, debauched; an easy prey for the exploitation of evil forces.

We have been so conditioned by the excesses of war that our minds are somehow unresponsive to the less spectacular needs of rehabilitation. The sufferings of those who are hungry and unclothed in a world that has ample resources to feed and clothe everyone adequately fail to evoke more than a passing emotion. We hoard our gold while the rest of the world goes bankrupt. We preach tolerance and democracy abroad, but neglect to practice them at home. This is the Twentieth Century Cult of the Cruel into which we have all been initiated, and it is no different from the cruelty that crucified our Lord.

THE SIN OF ATHEISM

As there is the sin of cruelty, so the sin of atheism grows apace in the soil of frustration, economic collapse and low ideals. This atheism is the organization of personal and corporate living with a complete denial of God, with no attention to his will, and with no desire to enlist in his service. This temptation to ignore God is present everywhere. The Bulu, in darkest Africa, says that God made him and then turned his back. This attitude is all too prevalent, for it is easy to discard old faiths. Each age would seem to prove the modernity of skepticism. Our Lord also met this temptation on the cross when he cried out in the darkness: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—but he conquered it by the powerful

thrust of his spirit—"Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Cruelty, atheism and selfishness are the major sins of our generation as they were in A.D. 33. Jesus was killed because the men of Galilee and Judea were too selfish to do anything about it. They were preoccupied with trivial pursuits, they were content with things as they were. They did not wish to be summoned from lives of ordinary ease to dangerous living with Jesus as Lord. Selfishness—selfishness on the part of the men of Jerusalem who were too greatly concerned with their own affairs to rescue the Lord of their life, selfishness on our part when we refuse to enlist in some great cause, give our lives to some supreme sacrifice or devote our talents to the coming Kingdom of Christ. We must come to grips with the sordid reality of this selfishness in every generation.

Tolstoi, in his book, *Resurrection,* says: "Men are like rivers; the water is the same in one and all; but every river is narrow here, more rapid there, here slower, there broader, now clear, now dull, now cold, now warm. It is the same with men. Every man bears in himself the germs of every human quality; but sometimes one quality manifests itself, sometimes another, and the man often becomes unlike himself, while still remaining the same man." Tolstoi's words have a universal truth. Man *is* unlike himself, narrow, fast, cold and dull when the times call for men who should be broad and warm and clear in their thinking.

THE DARKNESS OF HEAVEN

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." *There was the darkness of Heaven.* Say it reverently! Speak of this quietly, for you behold the weeping of Heaven at the tragedy on Golgotha. When Jesus came to Bethlehem the heavens were alight with the brilliance of a Star in the East. When Jesus died on the cross, men beheld the spectacle of darkness, for, in the compassion of God, the final agony of his Son was curtained by the night. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth."

There came a great silence at that darksome noon. We have witnessed the same phenomena in a total eclipse of the sun, when the birds have hushed their singing and the dogs have lain down to rest. But there was a still stranger result at Calvary—the shouting and the tumult died away, men slunk to their homes as cowards whipped in flight, women closed the shutters on their windows and the children stopped their play. The uproar and the blasphemy of the mob was ended. Who may doubt that this darkness of Heaven came so that sinners would be brought to their knees, as Peter weeping bitterly after his denial? Who may doubt that men who had been led to witness an awful deed, now were humbled at this wonder of God and felt their consciences stir within them? Who may doubt that there were some men of Jerusalem like the Roman Centurion at the cross who then believed and said: "Truly, this was the Son of God"? Pray that this Holy Day may bring us to our knees in appreciation of our Savior's undying love and a new consecration to him.

'AFTER DARKNESS—LIGHT!'

In the Assembly Hall of the League of Nations, the traveler may read the words: "After Darkness—Light!" And so it was at the cross of Christ—the promise of everlasting Light—the sun in the west breaking through the clouds, the sky transformed as by a great miracle, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding coming to earth. What was it Jesus had said, what were the words, so obscure when they were uttered, which now had found their right setting, which now were coming to pass, which even now were beginning to find meaning in the minds of his disciples? "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself. . . . Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. . . . I am the Resurrection and the Life."

Here was the word of a gentleman who had lived with them during his public ministry, in whom they had found no inconsistency and about whom they wrote: "Tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Here was the word of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known, who said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." It was just the night before in an Upper Room when he had talked to them so simply about Heaven. "Let not your hearts be troubled—ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's House are many mansions—if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also." Now his words had new meaning—what if they were true! And the disciples waited for a sign, though on that dark afternoon they scarcely dared to anticipate the stone rolled away from the entrance of an empty tomb—the glory of the Resurrection.

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." Then the sun broke through the gloom and touched with golden fire the faces of the weeping women, of Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus of Jerusalem. This scene has been brought to life in Kennedy's play, "The Terrible Meek." Out of the darkness, the soldier says: "Look, it's coming light again!" And the Centurion replies, "Eternally!"

IT IS often suggested that if only every one of us were Christian, that would solve all our problems. It is not true. This world is terribly complex, and Christian good will, important as it is, does not solve the technical problems. It is the essential lubricant, but it takes an extraordinary combination of knowledge and executive ability in a lot of key spots to get us out of the international mess in which we are now overwhelmed, not just the acceptance of Jesus as Savior by everyone. CHARLES P. TAFT.

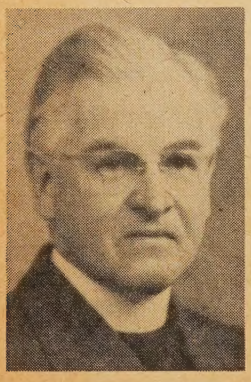
MAN is powerful, and becoming daily more powerful. He may or may not bring his power under moral control. He had better try, however, because he can neither stop the clock of history nor turn it back.
REINHOLD NIEBUHR.

Christ Before Pilate

By BINNEY SIMPSON BLACK

Are you saying this of your own accord, or did other people tell you about Me? John 18:34 (Moffatt).

THE NAME of Pontius Pilate will never die, not because he was an admirable character but because of the part he bore in reference to the death of Jesus. The world will think of him as a key man in the events leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus, but he proved unequal to his high trust and by his moral cowardice made possible the foulest crime in history—the crucifixion of the Savior of the world.



Yet it is possible to be unfair to Pilate. Perhaps we should find it in our heart to pity him to some extent. He was a typical Roman, stern and practical, and religion meant nothing to him. He knew the world, and how full of opinions it was, and how its various philosophies and religions contended with one another for the first place, and his attitude seemed to be that of a neutral. He just looked with a sort of tolerant contempt upon them all, and, if left to himself, would have allowed Jesus to go his way. For it is surely clear from the Gospels that Pilate was not bitter toward Jesus and that he sought more than once some means of releasing him. He tried to have the Jews accept a compromise in one form or another up to the last desperate attempt to substitute Barabbas. We may believe that every time Pilate conversed with Jesus and gazed upon that marvelous face with its majestic dignity and strength he must have been convinced that the enemies of Jesus had no case against him. So much so that Pilate plainly said to them, "I find no fault in him."

THE CASE OF PILATE

But Pilate was afraid of Imperial Caesar, and when the cry, "If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar's," began to be heard above the tumult it brought to Pilate's mind a new and overpowering fear. For the prisoner brought before him was accused of treason against Rome, the greatest crime known to the Roman law. The Jews knew that Jesus was not a king in a political sense, but they wanted Pilate to believe that he was. And Pilate was not likely to let any suspicion of disloyalty on his part reach the ear of Tiberius at Rome, for Tiberius was very jealous in a case like that.

Besides, Pilate did not want to offend the Jews. He had a bad record as a governor, and therefore a bad conscience, and "conscience doth make cowards of us all." He was afraid that the Jews might report him as unwilling to deal with this charge of treason, and then the Roman government might make inquiries and Pilate might lose his position. So Pilate's first concern is to further his own interests and ingratiate himself with the powers that be.

Accordingly, in his examination of Jesus Pilate evades those questions that his own heart and mind might have prompted, and simply echoes the current inquiries, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" The Master, reading Pilate's character at a glance, puts to him a question which of itself was a crushing answer: "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning Me?" Is this question your very own, Pilate, or is it at the promptings of other people? Does the question come from your tongue or from your heart? Are you really concerned yourself or is your question second-hand?

TODAY'S URGENT NEED

Of course Christ is greater than anything anyone can say about him. And although nearly twenty centuries have passed since he appeared on earth he still is greater than all the sons of men in intellectual and spiritual grandeur, the world's supreme guide in thought and conduct. Christ has never been exhausted or mastered. The world's most urgent need today is a larger conception of the inexhaustible Christ, and then a nobler expression of him in life.

The oldtime prophet Hosea used the words, "Let us follow on to know the Lord." They have had a wider application than he dreamed. What a meaning in the light of Jesus! Let us follow on to know *his* mind and spirit. Let us understand his view of life and make it ours. Let us know his power, the power that made the days of the early church so triumphant. Let us know him as sufficient for every need, sufficient to lead us to high endeavours, to keep us from easy compromises, and to make our life victorious.

But this question did not die away the day it was put to Pilate. It has faced every thinking person since Jesus' day. It has compelled all serious hearts to answer it and to decide about Christ for themselves regardless of what others think and say. The great thing is that each of us shall know Christ for himself, and not see him only through other people's spectacles—the spectacles of this club, or of that writer, or of that denomination. "Are you saying this of your own accord, or did other people tell you about Me?"

Of course we cannot but be influenced by what others have thought. The thoughts of others enrich and stimulate our thoughts and on their tidal waves we may rise to higher levels. For example, there is the religious teaching of our childhood. How can we ever forget it? Perhaps we did not always understand it. But the memory of a good father and mother who sought to teach us the good ways of God will never fade, even though these pious teachers of our early years have been long invisible. Yet this religion of our parents in one sense will not suffice for us. We must have a religion that we have made our own.

WHAT ABOUT THE CREEDS?

We must respect, indeed, the creeds of the church into which we were born and baptized. But this does not mean that the right of private judgment will not

be exercised by us. As a case in point, we think of the Westminster Confession of Faith. This document is the Confession of English-speaking Presbyterians and is strongly Calvinistic. It was produced by remarkable men and is on the whole a remarkable statement of Christian doctrine. But we are not to make a fetich of it. We should be able to hold it with perfect liberty of conscience. The Confession of Faith has come down to us from the seventeenth century. We venerate this document, as we ought to do. But all human formularies have their limitations. This is because religion is a progressive revelation to the mind and heart of man. As men grow, as they become more wise and spiritually minded, the truth is more and more unfolded and developed before them.

THE SPIRIT A PRESENT GUIDE

Surely God has been teaching us something during the past three hundred years, teaching us in world events and by his ever-living Spirit. The Spirit who guided the makers of the Westminster Confession has not ceased to guide men. John Robinson, who sent the first of the Pilgrim Fathers on their voyage, had grasped this truth and wrought it into a classic phrase: "More truth and light shall yet break forth from His holy Word." Christ is ever saying to his earnest followers: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

So no form of creed can be permanent, for it does not hold or express *all t*he truth of God. "Let knowledge grow from more to more," sang Tennyson. We are children, and as Paul says, "our knowledge is but partial." But as R. W. Dale once wrote: "The Spirit of Truth is near to us all, to guide us into all the truth, and when we vindicate the right of private judgment we are but insisting on the duty and privilege of every Christian soul to receive the teaching of the Spirit of God."

We are not bound to follow any of the formularies of other days unless we honestly believe what they say. We are not Roman Catholics who are expected to believe, without thought or question, the interpretation put upon the Bible by the authorities of that church. It is much easier to subscribe to someone else's thinking than to have a statement of our own. But our own apprehension of the truth will be vivid and vital for us, however simple it may be, if it is what we have beaten out on the anvil of our own experience and which therefore is our very life.

THE CALL FOR CONVICTION AND COURAGE

Jesus once asked his disciples the question, "Who do people say that I am?" The Master wanted each of them to speak for himself and express his personal view. In the last analysis it is this that counts. The claim to be "orthodox" often has nothing in it. Some people are orthodox simply because they are too lazy to be heterodox. Yes, we must have a religion we have made our own, and as Jesus had his question for the religious guides and teachers of his day, as well as for the pagan Pilate, so for our day in these long centuries after, in a world where everything is being tested, Christ puts to skeptics, and he puts to Christian people, this one question: "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning Me?"

Pilate halted between two opinions. He vacillated. He kept his ear to the ground. He was an opportunist. His actions were determined by circumstances, not by principles. Expediency would be a big word in his vocabulary. We would call him a time-server, one who adapts his opinions to the times. The world is full of craven souls like this, and generally they come to grief as they deserve. Pilate's extreme caution was really cowardice, and in the end it finished him.

INDIFFERENCE A PERIL

It requires courage to be on the unconventional side. To think straight and true, to be sure you are right, and then to take your stand no matter who supports you; to utter your conviction, even if you stand alone —this takes courage, moral courage. But the person who is afraid to be in the right with only two or three has not learned the alphabet of character, for there is no true character without courage. This is the word: Be strong!

What is it that does most injury to the cause of Christ? It is not the violent opposition that comes out into the open and flaunts itself. You can at least see that and plan to meet it. But there is the easygoing indifference of the people who accept a whole system of religious truth without reflecting on it and never trouble to ask what meaning for their conscience, thought and life they ought to be finding in the august claims of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What are opinions that we just take over as a man would hand a sack of flour to another? They are generally external to us and do not enter into the marrow of our being. It is the thoughts on which we concentrate, the ideas and ideals over which we brood, the doubts with which we wrestle—it is these that give us strength and build us up and make us useful. Some persons by the exercise of individual freedom may grow proud and presumptuous, but as a rule the more earnestly and reverently we think about great subjects the more humble and teachable we become, and the better able we shall be to distinguish moral values, to recognize the difference between theology and religion, between mere opinion and a vital faith.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

"Are you saying this of your own accord, or did other people tell you about Me?" That is the question. The Jesus who stood at Pilate's judgment seat is standing before our modern age with all our theories and perplexing questions, and he asks us what conclusions we are reaching. He would have us enjoy that independence and assurance which made the life of the church in days gone by a praise and a glory because men could speak out of deep experience and knew Christ at first hand. He wants *us* to know him for ourselves, not that we may whet the sword of controversy, but that we may be won by his matchless love and find our lives made beautiful through him; yes, and that we may be inspired by him for greater service in the

world. He wants us to be happy in the fullness of joy and whiter than snow in the fullness of pardon.

Christ is still on trial as an abiding Presence in our world. He challenges the assent of our intellects and the loyalty of our hearts, for he is still the world's great Figure, and his greatness is full-orbed; he is the fountain of all our religion, of all our comfort, and of all our hope, "the same yesterday and today and forever."

The Meaning of the Cross

By HAROLD E. JOHNSON

THERE is no event in all recorded history which is as well attested to as the crucifixion of Jesus, his death and burial, and his resurrection on the third day —victorious over sin and the grave. You who have found your way to this morning's service of worship bear witness to the truth of that statement. Yet, for twentieth century Christians, the cross, the symbol of Christ's eternal victory over the forces of evil and of death, is one of the most perplexing and baffling aspects of modern theology. The teachings of Jesus men can understand. At times, they even try to put them into practice. But, for the most part, modern Christians stand before the central symbol of their faith—the cross —and, although they may be amazed and transfixed by its glory, they are utterly powerless either to explain or to understand its real meaning.

In an attempt to put into words the meaning of the cross, a great many hymns have been written, but for the average Christian they are just so many words. The central meaning of the cross is not to be found here. For example: "In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time. All the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime." "I must needs go home by the way of the cross, there's no other way but this." "When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of Glory died, my richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride." These hymns are beautiful and deeply spiritual. They stir fond and precious memories within our souls. But they do not speak to us of the central and basic meaning of the cross.

The great tragedy of so many modern Christians is that they find themselves in the same intellectual and spiritual confusion, and faced by the same inability to put the real meaning of the cross into mature words, as was John Milton, the great English poet. In 1629, he wrote his lovely "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity." A year later, he attempted to write a companion poem to it on "The Passion." After only eight toilsome verses had been written, he gave it up. Some time later, he wrote these words about the unfinished poem: "This subject the author finding to be above the years he had when he wrote it, and nothing satisfied with what was begun, left it unfinished."

Today many Christians are also powerless to explain or to put into words the meaning of the cross. But we cannot leave the matter unfinished as did John Milton. There is something haunting about it which will not let us put it aside. Rather, we must deal with it as best we can.

I

If we are to understand adequately the meaning of the cross for our day we must see it under three major ideas. First, *we must see the cross as an historic fact in the history of mankind.* The fundamental basis for our understanding of the cross must be in terms of human tragedy. Human life could hold no greater tragedy than that Jesus should die a violent death upon the cross. He lived a pure, beautiful and wholesome life. He was motivated only by the highest ideals. And he gave us a truer insight into what a Godlike life might be than any other man the world has ever known. But—they killed him. They crucified him upon a cruel, hated Roman cross.

The factors which crucified Jesus were common ones, which only increases the sin of that tragedy on its human and ethical level. The sins which crucified Jesus are eternal ones in that they are still prevalent in our world today. And they are still the sins that lead inevitably to human tragedy.

Here are the factors and the sins which crucified Jesus: a crafty, unscrupulous and corrupt priesthood seeking to hush a haunting voice which would rob them not only of their religious position as leaders, but would also take from them their "economy of graft" by which they obtained outrageous amounts of money from the people under the guise of religious piety: a combination of the sins of religious intolerance, covetousness and commercial privilege; a superstitious and cunning politician who was not only caught between Rome and the howling mob and who finally sold his honor for his office, but one who could not make up his mind concerning the guilt of Jesus until it was too late; the sins of political expediency, intellectual dishonesty and personal indecision were there also; a callous and morose mob out to crucify a man whom they thought had played with their highest religious emotions and expectations—the coming of the Messiah—and then thwarted them by refusing to follow through as they thought he should: the age-old sins of simple revenge and public apathy.

All of these sins, incorporated with a single purpose and motivated by an unholy desire, threw themselves with vengefulness at Jesus' head. It was a black and total tragedy showing the worst that man is capable of doing to man.

Death by the cross was the most ignominious that could have been inflicted. The Roman citizens were exempt from it. It was a death reserved for murderers, slaves and common criminals. Yet, the gentle Jesus, a

teacher of love, an advocate of peace and good will among men, who lived and spake as man had never lived nor spake, was innocently, and perhaps illegally, sentenced to die. He was severely scourged with a leather whip with pieces of sharp bone tied in the ends of thongs. He was driven to the top of Calvary's hill and there nailed to a rough wooden cross, and left to face not only the raging elements and the milling and hostile crowd, but also a slow and agonizing death.

In the year 500, when men still lived by the sword, Clovis I, king of the Frankish empire, was converted to Christianity. Upon hearing the story of the crucifixion of Jesus for the first time, he was so intensely moved by it that he jumped to his feet, unsheathed his sword, and shouted: "If I and my Franks had been there, they never would have done that to him." That should also be our reaction to the crucifixion of Jesus. It was a diabolical crime, a complete human tragedy, alike in its ignominy, malignity and stupidity. The crucifixion of Jesus was the greatest human tragedy the world has ever known, and we must see it fundamentally as a tragic fact in the history of mankind if we are to understand its real meaning.

However, there is one element in that tragedy of death which, although it does not completely sanction it, at least goes a long way toward redeeming it. That element is this: Jesus chose to die. He was acting in the upper realm of the spirit, in the area of what we might call unenforceable obligations. He could have gone down the back side of the Mount of Olives and taken the highroad east of the Jordan and been back in the little town of Nazareth in the morning, had he chosen to do so. That would have solved the whole matter from all angles—all except his own. But what then? What of the message he came to preach? What of the abundant life he came to bring to man? It is only when a man dies for his convictions that anything is wrought out of life. And Jesus knew it. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies," he said, "it remains a single grain. But if it dies, it bears rich fruit. He who loves his life shall lose it, and he who cares not for his life in this world shall preserve it for all eternity."

Jesus chose to die. Nevertheless, the crucifixion of Jesus as an historic fact in the history of mankind is the fundamental basis of our understanding of the meaning of the cross.

II

There is a second major idea under which we must see the meaning of the cross. *We must see the cross as a spiritual symbol of redemptive and creative conflict.* William L. Stidger has tried to express in a poem entitled "I am the Cross" the change which I would like to have you see from the "cross as an historic fact" to the "cross as a symbol."

I am the Cross of Christ,
I bore his body there on Calvary's hill.
Till then I was a humble tree that grew beside
a rill;
I think, till then,
I was a thing despised of men.

I am the Cross of Christ,
They say I tower "o'er wrecks of time."
I only know, that once a humble tree,
This was not so. But this
I know—since then
I have become a symbol for the hopes of men.

In the cross we can see the Almighty's method of overcoming evil, of transforming tragedy into triumph. Hegel makes this observation in his introduction to his *Philosophy of History*: "We may affirm absolutely that nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion." Arnold Toynbee, in his *A Study of History,* is advocating the same thesis when he says that "nothing worth while in the world is won without a struggle." Bach's great "B Minor Mass" has as its essential theme the glory of creation coming into its triumphant fulfillment by way of the passion of the cross.

What these men are saying is this: Life is no easy road. Rather it is a road of majestic re-creation and redemption. It is literally a continuous re-creation of discord into harmony and of tragedy into triumph. One of the eternal purposes of God is to make life into a great symphony or a great drama in which the central theme is the transformation of the discordant and the ugly into the beautiful and the harmonious.

Now, take this same idea of redemptive and creative conflict and apply it to Jesus and his cross. Look at Jesus there in the Garden of Gethsemane, with the shadow of the cross falling across his very path. What did he do with it? He laid hold of it. He wrestled with it. He lifted it up into his mighty passion. He transformed it. He recreated it. He redeemed it. And he made it an integral part of the life of all mankind. Jesus accepted the cross thinking that it would prove to be a stumblingblock for sin and that it would eternally thwart sin's downward drag in the life of man.

Our communion ritual has a prayer which expresses this very idea: Jesus Christ suffered "death upon the Cross for our redemption, and made there by the offering of himself, a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world." The conflict upon Calvary was not only one of personal redemption; it was also one of creative suffering. For in that tragic and lonely hour upon Calvary, God was in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto himself.

Let us carry this idea one step further. If it is true for the individual, then it is true for society as well. Therefore, we can apply this threefold idea of "creation, passion and redemption" to it also. The crucified Christ is the living statement of God's demand upon all society. The cross stands as the symbol of the way of redemption for society as well as for the individual. And that society may mount the path to a higher glory than she has ever known before; she, like her crucified Lord, may have to give up her life for humanity. As Reinhold Niebuhr says: "The Kingdom of God must still enter the world by way of the crucifixion." Surely here is God's way, and the only way of making anything out of life: a humble and self-abasing presence at the foot of the cross, a grateful self-fulfillment through the redemptive and creative conflict which culminated upon the cross of Calvary.

III

If we are to understand the total meaning of the cross, we must see it not only as a historic fact in the history of mankind, and as a spiritual symbol of redemptive and creative conflict; *we must see it as an eternal challenge in its transforming power.* Dr. Lucius Bugbee tells of one of the medieval altars built with panels on both sides of which are paintings of biblical scenes. One altar presents, on the outside, a very depressing portrayal of the crucifixion. Against a dark and dreary background, the heavy cross bears the body of Jesus. To one side stands a figure with an outstretched arm, indicating that there is something beyond, something not seen. And, as if in response to this urge, the panels are flung open. There is a flood of light and color, and in the center is the radiant figure of the Risen and Triumphant Christ. Certainly that is a picture of reality. On Good Friday, there is darkness covering the face of the earth. Hopes are blasted. Dreams are shattered. It all seems like a lost cause. But, as someone has said: "Lift up your heads, ye sorrowing ones, and be ye glad of heart, for Calvary and Easter Day were just three days apart."

Even on Good Friday we realize that there is something beyond, something that is not yet seen by mortal man. It is the Easter morn, the empty tomb, the risen Christ which give to the cross its transforming power. It is the Easter fact that transformed biography into religion. James Warnack, in *The Conqueror,* says: "Jesus they slew—but Christ they could not kill." In his redemptive conflict, he had been creatively transformed. A great man had become a living Lord. A prophetic voice now carried the overtones of the divine. Gracious words now took on the cadences of love spoken by the heart of the universe. The Jesus who walked and talked and preached and prayed and died became the Christ who walks and talks and preaches and prays and lives within our hearts eternally. The broken seal on the empty tomb thus becomes a seal of truth: God's certification upon the word spoken by the side of the Jordan: "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

It is this transforming fact of Easter that rescued the Christian movement from becoming simply a historic fact in mankind's history and set it free as a living redemptive and creative force in the world. On Easter morn, the Jesus of Nazareth became the Christ of Faith —our eternal contemporary. On that glorious day he burst the bars of death and now he walks all the highways of the world, and meets man on the level of his own needs. Thus the local became the universal, the momentary became the eternal. This transforming power of the cross, symbolized in the empty tomb, should be to us an eternal challenge, a challenge to live our lives in the shadow of the cross, and to see the world in its radiant light.

One morning after breakfast, Elizabeth Barrett Browning left her husband and went upstairs while a servant cleared the table where he expected to work. "After the servant had left, soft footsteps sounded behind him and his wife's hand on his shoulder kept him from turning so he could see her face. She slipped a manuscript into his pocket saying, 'Please read this, and if you do not like it, tear it up.' Then she fled back upstairs while Robert Browning sat down to read the noblest love sequence ever written by a woman to the man of her choice." Hidden in one of these *Sonnets from the Portuguese* runs this line: "The face of all the world is changed, I think, since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul."

In a far more significant sense those disciples who loved the Lord, hearing his footsteps again in their souls, found that the face of the world was changed for them. Realizing what he had meant to them, they went out to change the face of all the world. If we are to be true to the genius of Christianity, we must do the same. For the plain fact is that the risen Lord will not let those who love him glory in that love. Such vague mysticism would never have satisfied him. The promise of his comradeship and presence is a blessed thing indeed, but it is meant to be something more than that. It is meant to be a transforming thing. It is meant to be an inner compulsion which drives man forward to accomplish the tasks which he sets before them.

However, there are those who profess to be followers of the risen Christ who adhere to a certain type of saccharine Christianity which is not worthy of the name. It is all sweetness and light with no moral power whatsoever. It makes delightful souls of its adherents, but sets them about no great transforming or redeeming tasks. It can sing—"floods of joy o'er my soul like the sweet billows roll since Jesus came into my heart," and then rest content in the joy of that personal appearance. But such a substitute for faith would not have appealed to Jesus. And I am sure that he would not have approved it for us.

O my friends, on this joyous Easter Day, I appeal to you to see the cross of Christ in its total meaning. And for those who thus see it, there is one inescapable conclusion: the Risen and Triumphant Christ, working in and through us, is seeking to accomplish God's creative and redemptive purpose in the world. Armed by this faith, impelled by this transforming power, I urge you to take your stand and to work for that day when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.

TODAY there is wide agreement, on the physical side of science approaching unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading toward a non-mechanical reality. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that it is the creator and governor of matter. The universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine.

SIR JAMES JEANS.

FOR AMERICANS who hold in sacred memory the prophets and martyrs of their history, it is not a question of security or freedom; it is security through freedom. Any other kind of security is a form of slavery.

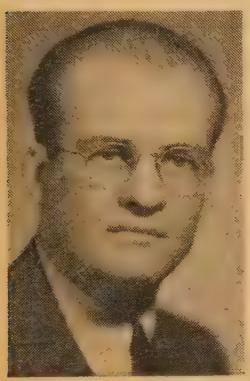
LAURANCE I. NEALE.

The Most Touching Scene in the Bible

By DON E. SMUCKER

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. Luke 19:41-42.

PALM SUNDAY to Good Friday is only six days. What a journey! Here is the crowd tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. Hosannas on Sunday; hisses on Friday. Cheers on Sunday; jeers on Friday. But, wait! Let us look more deeply. Hosannas and cheers on Palm Sunday? Of course this is true to part of the biblical record. But is it the whole truth? By no means. It was true of the crowd but not of Jesus. The reality of Palm Sunday is tears not cheers. Jesus wept over Jerusalem. And I believe that this is the most touching scene in Holy Scripture. Consider, then, the setting for Palm Sunday.



I

The story starts in Bethany. Two miles from Jerusalem Jesus rested with dear friends: Mary, Martha and Lazarus. A lovely benediction of inner peace came from this tender Christian fellowship. Now Palm Sunday is nigh. And no doubt it was a bright and sunny spring day.

Alas, what disappointment as the procession actually starts! No chariots! No prancing horses from Arabia! No brilliantly clad troops! No captives! No booty! None of the evidence for a great worldly leader. Only a borrowed colt—a lowly beast of burden which is awkward and ludicrous. Jesus came in meekness and utter simplicity.

Let us see very clearly that here Jesus is renouncing political fanfare and military might. This is the King of Kings who rides on this absurd little animal. How in contrast to our political messiahs!

I recall a scene in Berlin in the ill-fated year of 1938 when "Munich" was brewing. Balbo, the No. 2 man of Italy, came to visit Herman Goering, the No. 2 man of Naziland. The public was told that these men could be seen at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. For hours the crowd waited—and I was one of them. Bands played. The rays of the sun became more and more unbearable. Soon the tempo of the bands became frenzied; the music itself fierce and warlike. Now a group of war veterans appeared. But our ears soon caught the click-click-click of the goose-step. Our eyes now caught up with our ears. Yes, here was the supreme symbol of regimented German militarism. The German goose-step by a crack nazi regiment. Hard leather boots on the pavement of Unter Den Linden. Out of nowhere comes the crazy shrill of sirens. A fleet of limousines now appears. There they are! Yes, there are Balbo and Goering. Behind bullet-proof glass in racy high-powered cars. Behind storm-troopers and secret service carrying powerful weapons. The big cars screech to dramatic stops. Balbo steps out with trim snap and polish. Goering slips out of the car looking proud and powerful and satisfied. Now Balbo goes over to the nazi troopers stoically standing at attention with fixed bayonets. Perfunctorily they are inspected. Soon a lackey comes up with a huge wreath nearly six feet high. This is laid on the tomb. A harsh guttural command leads to a gun salute. Boom! Boom! Boom! The ceremony is over. The bands strike up the Horst Wessel song, the nazi anthem. Balbo and Goering return to their well protected limousines which swing away down the street, soon out of sight! Bands and troops march away. The No. 2 political messiahs have come to town. Every technique of worldly display has been used.

Place this picture over against Palm Sunday and the contrast is tremendous. Our Lord came as one meek and lowly.

Presently the procession begins to gain momentum. From the sides of the road many people join in. Everywhere pilgrims for the Passover are in evidence. They swell the happy ranks. Lyrical outbursts are heard. "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven and glory in the highest." The atmosphere is infectious and moving. The Pharisees look on horrified and frightened. Naively they ask Jesus to rebuke this spontaneous celebration. Instantly our Lord replies: "I tell you that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." The moment of destiny cannot be stopped.

The picture quickly comes into focus. The procession reaches that spot where all Jerusalem can be seen. The artistry of Sholem Asch helps us to appreciate the impact at this point. A glorious panorama was unfolded before them. It was noon. The glistening sun showed on the beautiful buildings. It looked like a set of precious jewels on a gorgeous crown. Before them were two dominating architectural sights. The palace of Herod—the symbol of worldly power. The great Jewish temple—the symbol of priestly power. The temple was golden like an uplifted flame. It looked like it had descended from the heavens, perfect and glorious, unmade by human hand. Flaming walls! Flaming gates! Flaming roofs! A lazy pillar of smoke came from the temple. Below a yellow flame. Above a gray cloud. Yes, the appearance of the temple was unearthly, strange, unbelievable.

The marchers finally recovered to shout, "O, Jerusalem!" In that phrase the marchers made every letter mean awe, pride and fascination. Their eyes have feasted on the greatest sight of their little world. Now they turn to Jesus. Perhaps he will put *their* feelings into an unforgettable epigram. But no! "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." In that sobbing sentence Jesus experiences the utter tragedy of spiritual

blindness and rebellion, the curse of many centuries.

Jesus saw far more than Jerusalem. He saw the original rebellion of Adam and Eve. He saw the murderer Cain. He heard Cain's selfish question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" He saw Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage. He saw Joseph experience the ruthlessness of his jealous brothers. He saw the great oppression in Egypt. He saw the golden calf. He saw the fall of Samson. He saw the sin of David. He saw the evil Hebrew kings. He saw this endless story of backsliding. He saw the prophets pleading to no avail. He saw the stiff-necked people. He saw Judas. He saw Calvary. He saw you. He saw me. He saw the twentieth century. Ah yes, our Lord saw the supreme tragedy of all times and all ages: men and nations who know not the things which belong to their peace. This, I repeat, is the most touching scene in the Bible.

II

Today, Jesus is weeping over the Jerusalems of the twentieth century!

Jesus is weeping over the nations.

Only once have I seen a prominent national leader weeping over the nations. In this case, Heinrich Bruening, the last democratic chancellor of pre-Hitler Germany. In the auditorium of the Yale Law School in 1937 Bruening was describing the tragic experiences of his government. The reactionary nationalism was growing. Every policy of wisdom was blocked, stopped, frustrated. While rehearsing this terrible nightmare Dr. Bruening broke down in tears before a sophisticated university audience. A few years later I read Pierre Van Passen's account of Bruening's ghastly disaster in Paris. Seeking concessions to stop the nazi charge that justice is gained only by force, the German chancellor went to Paris. The premier of France then was Pierre Laval, later ill-famed as the traitor of Vichy. Laval's cold, steely opposition was immovable. Bruening went to his knees, begging, pleading for concessions. Laval's answer was a brutal signal to get out. Right there he sealed the fate of both democratic Germany and France. He knew not the things which belonged to his peace.

Jesus is weeping over our American communities. The Old Testament calls it idolatry; we call it secularism. Commercial entertainment geared to a moronic level of sheer emotion. Education without allegiance to Almighty God. Vested interests without concern for the common weal. A church too often afraid of all this Baalistic nightmare. A church too often without a clear message from Jesus Christ. Consider a specific case. The use of money is often an index of our spiritual health. Here is a small city in the midwest: $110,000 spent on the public schools annually; $60,000 on the churches; $322,000 on liquor with one store alone doing a business of $170,000. In other words, for every dollar spent on schools and churches, three dollars is spent on beer and booze. Jesus is weeping over Middletown, USA. She does not know the things which belong to her peace.

Jesus is weeping over disillusioned young people without hope. Roy Burkhart tells of his experience during the war with a young lieutenant. The place was Penn Station, New York. He was startled when he noticed this young officer sobbing and crying. With a pastor's sense of duty, Roy Burkhart approached this young man. He asked if he might help in some way. Quickly the young officer reached for his inner coatpocket and produced a letter, urging Dr. Burkhart to read it. Sensing that the document was too precious to be read, the pastor asked for a summary of its contents. Then the moving story came forth. Just before leaving his home in Montana the young lieutenant was given this letter by his mother. Since it was old and tattered he had not bothered reading it until arriving in New York just before going overseas. It was a note which said something like this: "Dearest Wife: In a few moments I am going to France. I am thinking of you and the little baby we are expecting. One thought comes to me. It is the theme of our great President, Woodrow Wilson. This is the war to end war. As I think of that little one, it is only this hope which sustains me. This is the war to end war. Love.—Your husband." Then the officer broke with emotion again and quietly said: "I was that little baby. Now I have a wife back home in the same condition. I have no hope to sustain myself as I go overseas in the Second World War." There is the tragedy of war: young men dying and killing without hope for a brave new world.

Yes, our Lord is weeping over the disillusioned young people of the world. Today that hopelessness has not been changed by the events since V-E Day.

On Palm Sunday our Lord did weep over the tragedy of human folly. But he didn't stop with weeping—nor should we. He drew close to the city in triumph and glory. He was going to exchange his tears for a cross. And the cross was his answer to human tragedy.

III

Today the Christ of triumph offers the redeeming hand of fellowship. The Savior starts with you, the real you. The moral madness of yesterday does not matter. The backsliding of yesterday does not matter. The rebellion and blindness and weakness of yesterday do not matter. Only faith and repentance are required. Christ entered Jerusalem in triumph. He wants to enter your holy of holies in triumph. "O God, save the world, beginning with myself." So a Chinese Christian prayed with perfect insight into the gospel story. Salvation starts with individuals in a mighty encounter between God in Christ Jesus and man in the rags of sin and evil.

Christ wants to enter the hearts of nations. Is Jesus Christ the Lord of London? Is Jesus Christ the Lord of Paris? Is Jesus Christ the Lord of Moscow? Is Jesus Christ the Lord of Chungking? Is Jesus Christ enthroned in our own Washington, D. C.? Alas, to ask these questions is to answer them. Of this, however, we are sure. Never did the gospel seem so urgent to the life of nations. Never did the alternatives to the gospel look quite so shabby and impossible. Today Christ offers the redeeming hand of fellowship to the nations. The living Christ speaks to a dying world! He is the Prince of Peace.

Christ wants to enter families which are loveless and sour. God has supremely ordained the family as the

perfect place for love to grow and abound. Never did the gospel appear so urgent to the families of this nation. Before our very eyes the modern theories of marriage are collapsing in moral defeat. When Christ is enthroned in the home the family is equipped to face the uncertain future.

Christ offers his redeeming hand of fellowship to the churches. With civilization merrily going to hell there are still church leaders proudly pointing to big budgets and membership statistics. Without belittling either budgets or growing membership lists, I must confess this super-institutionalism leaves me cold. Not membership and machinery but a fresh experience with Jesus Christ. Not budgets and bureaus but a fresh experience with Jesus Christ. Not institutionalism but Christian discipleship. Walking the path of prophets, martyrs and missionaries. Christ stands at the door of our churches offering the redeeming hand of fellowship.

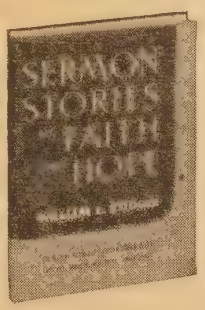
A few years ago the Columbia Broadcasting System stood by for the first broadcast by George VI. His brother Edward VIII had just abdicated. Ten minutes before the broadcast a wire snapped and the circuit was broken. Walter Vivian, the chief engineer, was consulted. He shook his head in defeat. It would take at least fifteen minutes to repair the wire. Then the broadcast would be completed and Columbia would lose out. Suddenly a gleam came to his eyes. "Yes, I can do it," he shouted. The other workers were puzzled. The time was at hand for the broadcast. With courage and daring, Walter Vivian grabbed the loose wires, one in each hand. Grimly he said, "Turn 'er on." The power was turned on, surged through the wires, and then through the body of Walter Vivian. He was the living connection, incarnate in human flesh. The broadcast went on to a successful conclusion.

What a parable for the Incarnation of God in Christ! With one hand the Lord Jesus reaches up to the Heavenly Father. With the other he reaches down to us. When we clasp his hand in simple faith and sincere repentance, the connection between God and man is re-established. Our broken lives are made whole. Our split personalities are unified. Our fractured families are made lovely. Churches become holy, catholic and apostolic. Justice is reality among nations. No longer is Christ weeping. All Heaven is rejoicing over the lost prodigal who has found the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

ACCUMULATE your science, your secular education, your economic prosperity—all that is excellent; it is in Christendom that these things have mainly flourished—but this world is so unescapably a moral order, and everything we human beings gain so inevitably depends for its effect upon the quality of soul that uses it, that nothing can save us without someone who can save us from our sin. Well, I propose to stand by Christianity a while longer. At any rate, far from being romantic, it presents the most realistic view of human life up to date. And if someone says, I'm giving it up, I ask, To whom, then, shall you go—to whom?

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK.

Good Reading— Good Preaching!



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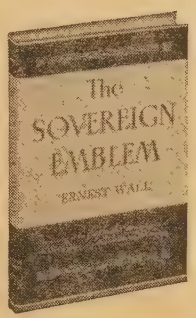

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The power of an endless life. Hebrews 7:16

EASTER is a symbol—the world's best symbol of the ultimate division between death and life. The first Easter dawned upon death. Not only Christ, but Christ's cause died upon Golgotha; and it went with him to the grave. There was no one who did not believe that death and the grave marked the end. Even the faithful women went not to meet their Master; they went to embalm his body. To see the disciples after Good Friday was to see men in despair, shame and fear: the despair of men who had lived in the light of a great dream, and who had seen it pitilessly destroyed; the shame of men who had not redeemed defeat even by their own dignity—who being men had not played the man; the fear of men who had not only abandoned their Master to death, but who knew that it might be their turn next. When the disciples were gathered, says the record, the doors were shut for fear. That is what awaited the first Easter—despair, shame, fear. After Good Friday the last word was death.

After Easter the last word was life. The despair was changed to gladness, the shame was transformed to glory, the fear was consumed in incandescent faith.

'THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE'

It is not possible to write in factual, rationalized biography of the events which changed the lives of men and women in those creative days. We have little to draw with, and the well is deep. But this is clear: the testified resurrection of Christ was accompanied by the indisputable resurrection of Christianity. What occurred poured new life into the course of human history, and liberated the greatest forces which have shaped the direction of Western civilization.

From these dispirited, unworthy men suddenly came an elevation of mind, a joy of living, a power to suffer without losing the joy, a courage that stared death out of countenance, a conquering faith that proved mightier than the Roman empire. Suddenly these men were living with undismayed hearts, with peace that the world could not give, and that the world with all its troubles could not take away. Their very language began to glow with a new and extraordinary radiance: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God . . . Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that . . . we shall be like him."

The writer to the Hebrews speaks of living in the "power of an endless life"; or, as Rufus Jones has put it, under the "spell of immortality." That is the visible consequence of the first Easter. It took men living in despair, shame and fear, and sent them out to live under the spell of immortality.

ON THE WRONG SIDE OF EASTER

That division in life—on the one side despair, shame, fear, on the other the spell of immortality—is an enduring division; a division marked as life is lived on the wrong side or the right side of Easter.

In the world today many people are still living on the wrong side of Easter. So we still have life set in despair, shame and fear.

In the world we have despair. Our recent shallow optimism concerning man's estate, grounded as it was in the idea of man's inevitable progress, has been shattered completely by the wild onslaught of those demonic forces which have given this generation ashes for beauty. Like the noonday darkness which came upon Golgotha, there has come upon man in the noontide of his living, the darkness of despair.

In the world we have shame. The unspeakable villainies which have desolated our years have not come from outside. The baseness is in man himself; man—modern, scientific, cultured, but within base and cruel; man, who has with evil will taken noble faculties and prostituted them to beastly ends. Humanity itself is shamed.

That despair, that shame, that fear can never be lifted on the wrong side of Easter. There is no power to call the specters forth. For on the wrong side of Easter the human spirit is forsaken in its calamity. Man stands alone. He cannot say: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that we shall be like him." Man is an alien in an uncaring scheme of things; he is an infant crying in the night; he is lost in the universe where nothing corresponds to his faith, his hope, his dream.

Easter, we said, was a symbol. It sets one interpretation of life over against another. Let us then see what life on the wrong side of Easter really means.

SPIRITUAL ORPHANS TODAY

Listen to the bitter words of the German philosopher Jean Paul Richter: "There is no God. I have traversed the worlds, I have risen to the suns, I have passed athwart the great waste places of the sky. There is no God. I have descended to the place where the very shadow cast by being dies out and ends. I have gazed into the gulf beyond and cried, 'Father, where art Thou?' But no answer came, save the sound of the storm which rages uncontrolled. We are orphans, you and I. Every soul in this vast corpse-trench of the universe is utterly alone."

Listen then to the words of a popular American writer, Somerset Maugham, as he pursues the issues further, and asks what it means if we be orphans: "If one then puts aside the existence of God and the possibility of survival as too doubtful to have any effect on one's behavior, one has to make up one's mind what

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is the meaning and use of life. If death ends all, if I have neither to hope for good to come nor to fear evil, I must ask myself what I am here for. . . . The answer is plain. . . . There is no reason for life, and life has no meaning."

That is grim—no reason—no meaning! But it is precisely the answer given in more vivid terms by a contemporary, Joseph Wood Crutch. He tells us that man's existence "has no more meaning than the existence of the humblest insect that crawls from one annihilation to another."

Well, that is one interpretation. And the men who take that interpretation can at least do what many others cannot. They can open their eyes to see what their position means. They know that is the only interpretation which can be given on the wrong side of Easter.

A FALSE INTERPRETATION OF LIFE

That interpretation, if it be true, is certainly not calculated to lift man's despair. Its very foundation, as Bertram Russell has stated, is in despair. The only immortality it knows is the immortality of despair.

That reading of life could never send a Moses to a Pharaoh, saying, "Let my people go." It could never move an Isaiah to write about nations beating their swords into ploughshares and learning war no more. It could never inspire a Niemöller to defy a Hitler. That conception of men as insects crawling from one annihilation to another could never move the human spirit to fight that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, should not perish from the earth. That creed could never send out men to live for it, to suffer for it, and for it to count their own lives as well lost if they could but light a candle which would not be put out. That conclusion could never move a man to gather his children about him and sing hymns of praise. People upon whose hearts that gloomy conviction has fastened would have moved among those early Christians like deafmutes in the chorus of the Ninth Symphony. It is a bleak and chilling place—the wrong side of Easter.

GREETING DEATH WITH A CHEER

To live on the right side of Easter is to pass from death unto life. It is to live under the spell of immortality. And to see the difference, let us turn aside from the gloomy philosophers we have heard, and read a paragraph from a letter in which one of the bravest souls in the world, Scott the explorer, is writing from his tent in the Antarctic concerning his companion Dr. Edward Wilson:

> If this letter reaches you, Bill and I will have gone out together. We are very near it now, and I should like you to know how splendid he was at the end—everlastingly cheerful, and ready to sacrifice for others. Never a word of blame to me for leading him into this mess. His eyes have a comfortable blue look of hope, and his mind is peaceful in regarding himself as part of the great scheme of the Almighty.

Think of that brave spirit, having fought and lost on the wastes of the Antarctic, dying with his companions, his eyes with a comfortable blue look of hope, and his mind at peace in regarding himself as part of the great scheme of the Almighty. To pass from Jean Paul Richter to Dr. Edward Wilson, is to pass from death unto life; and to be dying in a tent in the Antarctic with that comfortable blue look of hope and a mind at peace, in regarding himself as part of the great scheme of the Almighty, is to be living under the spell of immortality.

If you could let your mind run across the earth this morning, you would find men and women uncounted and uncountable, whose tired eyes Easter will light with that comfortable blue look of hope, and whose troubled minds will find peace in regarding themselves

A Pastoral Prayer

By JAMES CROSWELL PERKINS

ETERNAL GOD and loving Father, we come to Thee this day in the name of the Christ who is the joy of loving hearts, the pioneer of our faith and the shepherd of our souls. We come seeking to be taught anew by our Master, to be comforted by Thy Holy Spirit and to be lifted into the white light of Thy radiant love.

Send out Thy light and Thy truth into every heart, we beseech Thee. Illumine lives that may be darkened by worry, doubt or fear. Strengthen the better purposes of those who are tempted. Forgive and cleanse those who are truly sorry for wrongdoing and who are trying sincerely to do what is right. Renew the faith of those who find it hard to believe in Thee. Give fresh strength to those who feel weak and weary and overburdened.

Open our eyes, we pray, to the opportunities that we have of helping and serving one another. Make us more mindful of the needs of our fellow men and less absorbed in selfish concerns. May we have more of that spirit of unfailing kindness and forgiveness which we have found in Christ. Help us to share more and more the attitudes of Jesus—his sympathy for those in need, his slowness to judge and criticize, his quickness to help and to serve.

Earnestly we pray for the triumph of intelligent good will in every area of human relations. May the mind of Christ have greater control in our homes, in our dealings with others, and in racial and international affairs. We would strive more sincerely to live peaceably with all men. We ask it in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

as part of the great and good scheme of the Almighty.

Away beyond our crowded cities, beyond our thronged churches, in the farthest reaches of our own continent, in little villages of Africa, in cities of India, in the desolate places of China, on the isles of the Pacific, in ten thousand different places, in hospitals, in colleges, in churches, in homes, on ships in dangerous waters, despite all that violence and death can do the Easter song on this Easter morning will make one music as before. Men and women, as they sing, will thank God and take courage. They will again find faith that love is stronger than death; that the dark night will move into day, and that when morning breaks, hope will still see an angel standing in the sun.

That is what it means to live under the spell of immortality.

THE ETERNAL PURPOSE

To live under the spell of immortality is not only to see new perspectives in the long, strange course of this mysterious universe. It is to catch, in spite of constant confusion and thwarting, certain drifts and developments all too easily obscured in the brevity of our vision.

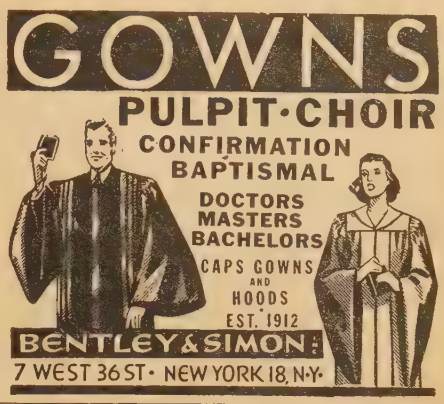
If a billion years ago in the unimaginable confusion, when all the oceans were in the air, impenetrable clouds of furious chaos, about a raging, erupting, shriveling crust that had just begun to sheath a molten sphere, if then some more than mortal being could have beheld that spectacle, how could he have foreseen quiet lakes and green valleys, daffodils and Easter lilies, redwood trees and the blue Pacific? How could he have foreseen that here would be the home of an Isaiah, a Plato, a Shakespeare? And what foretoken of reality could have brought to his ears the Hallelujah Chorus sounding through the nave of a cathedral?

Or in that warm mud where life first oozed, or in those ancient swamps where vast reptilian forms were as yet the supreme testament of life, who could have anticipated an Edith Cavell? "I see that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred nor ill will toward anyone."

You talk about the problem of evil, but what about the problem of goodness? How has life gone on from dragons in the slime to an Abraham Lincoln and a George Washington Carver? That is what has been happening. That, it is our faith, is what God wanted to happen. As Paul put it in his own characteristic phrasing, that is the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus.

To be sure evil is still strong. But as before, the conquerors will die—they are dying today—and when they are but a dreadful memory, there will still be a Name that is above every name.

For now all can see what would have been inconceivable in the age of the great sharks, or of the dinosaurs, that the universe is built on moral lines. On this earth the choice is righteousness or chaos. Life has no promise otherwise. We may have all knowledge, all science, all technology. We may uncover the secrets of creation and bend them to our will; but unless we subject them to an order not of atoms or of stars, unless we subject them to moral control, we shall but crawl back to the caves from which we first emerged.



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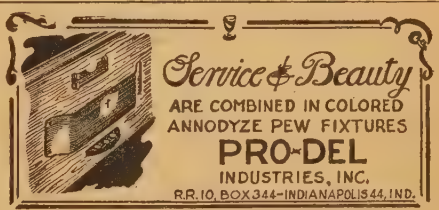

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In this world the choice is righteousness or chaos. That is what is becoming clear. That is what God wants to become clear. And to live on the right side of Easter is to keep in the eyes even in the midst of sorrows a comfortable blue look of hope, and a mind at peace in the assurance of an eternal purpose. That is to find life crowned with glory and honor. That is to live under the spell of immortality.

WHAT OF OUR LITTLE LIVES?

To live under the spell of immortality is not only to see new perspectives in the eternal purpose. It is to see new perspectives in our own little lives.

Professor Hocking has said that all the specific meanings of life, the worth of being alive, of activity, of accomplishment, of love and appreciation, of serving causes, all depend on a vision and assurance of some total meaning of life.

That is why life on the wrong side of Easter can never rise above forgetfulness or despair. The total meanings determine the specific meaning. If life itself has no reason, no meaning; if man is but an insect crawling from one annihilation to another, how can we invest anything he does with significance? What difference how the insects die, or how they live! But if men are children of God; if the central purpose of their lives is to live the quality of life which Jesus lived; if the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever, then we can trust that God will not bring lives to that glory only to blow them out like soap bubbles. We feel the force of the last question in the last sentence of the biography of Alice Freeman Palmer: "Who can contemplate the fact of her death and not call the world irrational, if out of deference to a few particles of disordered matter, it exclude so fair a spirit?"

There is much that we do not know. Heraclitus said long ago, "You can never discover the boundaries of the soul." We may be sure that simple pictures are not sufficient. We may be sure that when we get to the end of this life we shall not find another ready made, "where we can do without effort what we were meant to do with effort here."

LIFE NOT A DEAD END

But if there is much that we do not know, there are some things of which we are convinced. The total meaning determines the specific meaning. Because we believe in an eternal purpose finding its fulfillment in spiritual values, we are compelled to believe that life is not a dead end. We do not think that Isaiah, Socrates, Jesus, and the intimate company of those whom we

Jesus the Gardener

A Sermon for Children by Roy A. Wilson

THIS MORNING should be just about the happiest one in all the year for us. For a little over nineteen hundred years ago something happened that affects all of us—boys and girls and men and women alike. Something happened on a Sunday morning in a garden that made this world a better place in which to live. What was it? Yes, Jesus who was killed by his enemies, and who was buried in the garden tomb of a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea, arose and came out of the tomb! Bad men thought they could kill him and so be rid of him. But Jesus was the Son of God, and men could not kill him.

But when somebody came early Sunday morning to the garden to visit the tomb of Jesus, it was open and the body of Jesus was gone. Who was the person who came and discovered that the body of Jesus was gone? Yes, it was Mary. I am glad it was a woman who first met the Risen Lord. For women weren't important people before Jesus came. Men were! And women and girls were treated as slaves. How different now since Jesus came! Why, there are more women and girls in church this morning than men and boys, and nobody would dare say they aren't important!

That morning in the garden Mary was weeping because she thought somebody had broken open the tomb and stolen the body of Jesus. Then she turned and saw Someone standing. Who was he? Jesus! But Mary didn't know him at first because she was thinking of him as dead. She thought he was the gardener—the man who took care of the beautiful place where the tomb was. And then Jesus spoke to her, calling her by name—and she knew Jesus!

But Mary wasn't far wrong in thinking of Jesus as a gardener. For his Father, God, is the greatest of all gardeners.

We first read of God in the Bible as making a garden and placing the first man and the first woman in it to take care of it. They were named Adam and Eve. What was the garden called? That's right, the Garden of Eden.

God gives us this beautiful world in which we live, and it is like a great garden. He sends rain and sunshine, and makes the grass and flowers and trees grow. He wants us to enjoy this beautiful place. And he plants the seed of eternal life in each one of us, so that if we believe in him and love him and trust him, we will go on living forever. For we will go from this beautiful world to a more beautiful place which God has prepared—Heaven. And Heaven is a garden, too. Another name for Heaven is Paradise, and that means Garden.

Mary was right in thinking of Jesus as the gardener, but he is much more than she at first thought. He is the Son of God, the Gardener, and like God he cares for us all. For he loves us. So we should love him with all our hearts. For because Jesus arose on that first Easter morning, so shall we, when some day we shall leave this lovely world for one much more beautiful.

have loved and lost awhile, are "cast as rubbish to the void." We do not think that divine righteousness will lightly scrap the individual when even our poor human righteousness endeavors to be more just. We believe that when our loved ones pass, he is able to keep that which we have committed to his care. We are constrained by inescapable conviction. The total meaning determines the specific meaning.

Dr. Fosdick has put our conviction in cogent language:

> No man in those hours when he is intellectually and spiritually at his best can consent, without violence to his profoundest instincts, to believe in a world that loses all its gains, a world in which nothing that we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist. Without some form of personal permanence that issue to the cosmic process seems inevitable. . . .
>
> Death is a great adventure, but none need go unconvinced that there is an issue to it. The man of faith may face it as Columbus faced his first voyage from the shores of Spain. What lies across the sea he cannot tell; his special expectations all may be mistaken; but his insight into the clear meaning of present facts may persuade him beyond doubt that the sea has another shore.

That is the Christian's conviction, clothed in visible symbol in the observance of this Easter Day. To live in that conviction is to live under the spell of immortality; it is to know the power of an endless life.

You Are Important!

IN A DAY of billion dollar expenditures, assembly line production, manipulated pressure groups, rioting mobs, it is difficult to maintain belief in the importance of the individual. Yet one person may be the most significant person there is. "The number one differs from all other numbers, not in degree but in kind," declares Elton Trueblood in his book *Foundations for Reconstruction.* No matter what your status or what your substance, one word spoken, one prayer uttered, one vote cast, one cup of water given, may decide an issue, change a life, make a community, unite the nations.

Kirtley F. Mather intimates the significance of the individual when he writes: "It is impossible to imagine anything smaller than the proton and the electron, yet if a single proton and its companion electron are removed from the interior of an atom of mercury, that atom is transformed into an atom of gold. All the differences between gold and mercury depend upon the presence or absence of those two trivially small units of matter. In biology, the factors that determine the hereditary equipment of an animal or plant are known as genes. A gene is so small that not even the electron microscope is powerful enough to permit it to be seen, yet these units are so important that even yet we cannot grasp their full significance. All the differences between the potential genius and the congenital moron seem to be due to the presence or absence of a few of these superlatively important little things in life."

Let your light so count before men that they may see your worth, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

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The Minister's Inner Life

By ROBERT S. STEEN

A YOUNG coastguardsman, who had spent a considerable portion of his time in the service of the iceberg patrol, reminded us the other day that an iceberg is dangerous because the greater part of it is submerged and hence invisible. Somewhere we have read that as much as seven-eighths of it is beneath the surface. In a minister's life the same proportion would hold. The invisible, hidden, or inner life is all-important, giving tone and depth and color to that part of life which is opened and revealed. More than in any other calling or profession, with the possible exception of a poet, is this true of the ministry. An architect who has built his house of faith on the sand may still build good houses: a surgeon whose life is far from whole may nevertheless be proficient in his field—"a good doctor"—but before a man can be "a good minister" he must be a good man. He cannot lead others to heights that are foreign to himself. For him, the inner life is all-important.

● *'Springs of Living Water'*

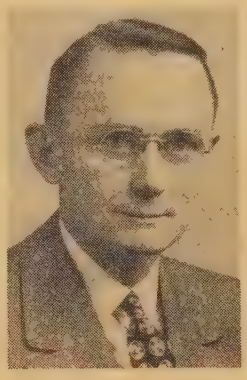
You will remember from your boyhood a favorite spring that never faltered or failed. In seasons of drought, and in seasons of flood, it brought from the hidden depth its clear, cold, pure and constant riches. This is the figure which Jesus used to describe his ministers—men who had within them an artesian stream, unfailing, springing up unto eternal life. No matter what times or seasons should bring, the waters were unabating, for they were not of the surface but of the depths. The minister's problem is to translate this from rhetoric to reality. Perhaps the man who said that most of us are "half-filled vessels trying vainly to brim over" diagnosed our difficulty.

Because this discussion must of necessity be suggestive rather than exhaustive there are certain assumptions to be made regarding our minister. He is a man who likes people, is physically equipped for the rigors of the ministry, and who knows and loves God. These are reasonable assumptions, even though an elder from another presbytery once asked me, "Are the ministers in Detroit presbytery pretty good Christians?" When I assured him that I thought they were, he said: "I'm glad to hear that. There was a time when some of the boys felt that being a Christian was a handicap in getting on in the ministry."

There are two ways in which we could face this problem of the minister's inner life. First, from the outside, by listing the many sources of tensions, irritations and problems and attempting to deal with these individually; and, second, by moving from the center of the minister's life to the circumference. Let us try this second approach.

● *Conscripts of Christ*

The minister is a man who is called. Dr. T. R. Glover reminded us that the word "called" in the New Testament might best be translated by the words "called up." He is conscripted, drafted, commissioned. When a man is commissioned by his country he undertakes duties on its behalf which have precedence over his own. "From henceforth let no man trouble me," wrote Paul to the Galatians (6:17), "for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."



ROBERT S. STEEN

Dr. Glover, in a magnificent passage in his book *Jesus in the Experience of Men,* writes: "Men play with the idea of being captains of their own souls. Paul was not. He had been; and then, as he says, necessity was laid upon him, and he became a conscript of Christ. That was nearer the mark than one might think; for sometimes in the Roman empire the conscript was branded too. The term 'the called' at the beginning of the epistles does not mean 'invited,' it is nearer the sterner sense of our phrase 'called up.' What it has meant, plenty of people know—the ruin of their affairs, hardship, subjection to an unwelcomed control. 'I have suffered the loss of all things,' says Paul. . . . The cross was still a scandal, the Christian church ignominious, and Jesus himself an unpopular and despised imposter. The careers men never reach are sometimes harder to give up than those they have achieved. Paul, a man of learning and charm, standing high among the men of his age and race for character and attainment in his own religion, a man with great prospects before him, sees everything swept away; and he is the slave of Jesus. It was no choice of his own; none. Men talk today about choosing Christ; but Paul did not choose him. Jesus chose Paul."

● *Not Called to a Picnic*

There has been a tendency to depreciate this New Testament view of a call. The ministry is pictured as one of a great many professions from which a young man may choose with equal freedom and with very little difference as to the contribution which his life might make. The difficulty with this view is that when a man finds it possible to stroll into the ministry—when the choosing has been his and he has not felt the constraint of Christ—he may as easily drift out. We heard it said some time ago that when 1949 comes business will slow down and more candidates will be enrolling in our schools and seminaries for full-time Christian work. One wonders, though, about the effectiveness of those who come into Christian service because there is nothing else they might do. The minister is called of God. He is the herald of an Eternal Gospel. The word he speaks is not his own.

Every minister will be confronted by constant inner problems who begins his life's work uncertain about his being in the right place. Soldiers expect hardships and, though they may complain, they do not let these overcome them. Ministers should know that we haven't been called to a picnic. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward" pertains to us too. This sense of mission that expects trials but endures them as good soldiers of Christ seems essential for inner peace.

● *The Minister Yesterday and Today*

A clear perspective. What comes first? There was a time when men called of God believed their first task was to preach the gospel. The minister's study was a sacred place where he toiled with loving fidelity over volumes of Christian truth. Here he listened for the voice of the King, that he might speak in living accents of his tone. From the homes of the parish prayers were lifted on his behalf. Lest one long for the days that are vanished, it ought to be said that our predecessors had their problems too, but they were not the same as ours.

Today it is very difficult for any

minister to have the time that he needs for study. Recently one of our presbyters remarked that our church is spending so much time in promotion that it is not ministers but business administrators we need. A young man coming out of seminary must be startled at the difference between what he had been taught is the minister's work and what he finds is expected of him in his church. Here is one of the most acute points of tension in the life of the average minister. Not alone on the presbytery and community level, but in his own congregation as well, activities have been multiplied so that the time for study and prayer grows ever more difficult to obtain. How can this be resolved?

● *The Pulpit at the Center*

The minister will need to recognize that despite the urgent pleas of the myriad good causes which woo him, his first responsibility is to preach. When his congregation gathers for worship, he shares with them the results of his labors. Dr. John Brown, author of *Rab and His Friends,* in a letter to Rev. John Cairns, told how his own minister father preached after his wife's death: "but from that time dates an entire, though always deepening, alteration in his manner of preaching. . . . Not that his abiding religious views were then originated or even altered . . . but it strengthened and clarified, quickened and gave permanent direction to his sense of God as revealed in his word. He took as it were to subsoil ploughing; he got a new and adamantine point to the instrument with which he bored, and with a fresh power . . . with his whole might, he sunk it right down into the living rock, to the virgin gold."

Now, however many secondary tasks may confront him, this is the minister's first and most distinctive task — the subsoil ploughing that reaches the living rock, the virgin gold. Many of the petty irritations, even if they did not vanish, would lose their power over us.

● *The Preacher and People*

The minister then is a man who is called, called to preach—to people? He is not secluded in a monastery. His preaching must touch human need, so he will not simply be available to people—he will go where they are. More than this, there can be no preaching without a meeting of minds and hearts on the part of pulpit and pew. No man should enter the ministry who does not love people—"by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that you love one another." The minister's inner life is enriched through these calls. Mary Carolyn Davies sang of a woman who went into a begrimed street to carry dreams to the poor people who lived in the dingy houses. She was startled, however, to discover that they had more dreams than she. What minister hasn't started a round of calls tired and jaded but returned with a song in his heart? Principal W. M. MacGregor, speaking of the necessity laid on a minister to know the people, said: "Even of our Lord Jesus it is written (Heb. 5:17) that he could only become a merciful and faithful High Priest by being made like unto his brethren; and if we are to share in his work that same demand is unescapable for us."

● *Building Jerusalem the Final Task*

Beyond the church—a world that pushes in to touch the inner life. Dr. Robert W. Frank intimates that he is growing a little weary of hearing ministers bemoaning in sermons and prayers "the confusion of the world." For Christians there should not be this confusion. We are heralds of him who said: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."

John Buchan, a distinguished Presbyterian elder, in his biography of Cromwell noted the tendency on the part of Puritans to close their eyes to the wide community that they might enjoy their religious ecstacy. "Many Puritans," he said "looked at the light and were dazzled. Oliver looked at the objects which it lit. He passed from the problem of the relation of man to his Maker to the problem of the relation of man to his world. He desired to see the world made an easier place for Christian people, and even in those days dreamed of an England in which might be built Jerusalem."

Every minister of Christ knows that in the multitude of his interests he may lose his own grasp on the hand of his Lord. "Lest having preached to others I myself should be lost," is a real danger. How shall we keep the channels open that he might come in and sup with us and we with him? On the night of nights when Christ was born it could be said of those shepherds who watched their flocks by night that "the glory of the Lord shone round about them." Something of this glory of God should always mark his undershepherds, and it comes to all who seek his face.

● *Ways to the Heart of God*

Time for communion? Nothing is more important. It has been said of Jesus that he found two solitudes: a solitude of time (early morning or evening), and a solitude of place—apart into a desert place to pray. Even so may we. Every man will have his own way of keeping near to the heart of God. For myself, these are the keys which open for me the door of the temple:

1. A quiet half-hour in the morning with a brief scripture lesson and some devotional literature. I have found John Baillie's *Diary of Private Prayer* the most helpful.

2. The rare occasions when it is possible to worship without being responsible for the service.

3. The use of hymns when alone—usually while driving. Many times a burden has been shifted, the darkness pierced and a Presence made known through this simple device.

4. Fellowship with other ministers. It is not only at church services that when two or three are gathered in Christ's name, he appears in the midst of them. Laughter has a great therapeutic value for the soul.

5. Sometimes when the church is silent and deserted, all the doors locked and no danger of intrusion, I like to slip quietly into a favorite pew and just "be still and know that He is God." A reverent imagination will, with little effort, people the edifice with an innumerable cloud of witnesses—the glorious company. Behind the pulpit there appear in succession the great preachers from every age and one is at once humbled and strengthened to feel that he follows in their train. He is lifted out of time into eternity—and the King of Glory does come in.

We are here, not to acquire material possessions which we must leave behind, nor to indulge in selfish pleasures, nor even to acquire knowledge which at most is partial, but to meet each experience in such a way that we shall be able to thank God for it.

ARCHER WALLACE.

From the PULPIT Mail

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☆ WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE ☆

Following pastorates in East Cleveland, Ohio, and Bellevue-Pittsburgh, Pa., Rev. HERBERT B. HUDNUT went to Woodward Avenue Presbyterian Church in Detroit, Mich., where he now ministers. He comes of a family of preachers; his father, Rev. William H. Hudnut, Sr., was for thirty-eight years minister of First Presbyterian Church, Youngstown, Ohio, and his brother, Rev. William H. Hudnut, Jr., is minister of Third Presbyterian Church, Rochester, N. Y.

Rev. BINNEY SIMPSON BLACK *comes from a long* line of ministerial antecedents. His maternal grandfather, Rev. W. H. Heu de Bourck, was eminent as a preacher and builder of churches in England, the United States and Canada. His father, Rev. James R. Black, was at one time chairman of the Congregational Union of Canada. Rev. Binney S. Black has ministered at Bonar Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Can., for the past seven years; in earlier years he served two Congregational churches in New York state. He graduated in arts from Queen's University, Kingston, Ont., and in theology from Knox College, Toronto.

Rev. HAROLD E. JOHNSON *is co-minister of St.* Paul's Methodist Church, San Bernardino, Calif. He has held pastorates in Oakdale, Mass., and Pasadena, Calif., and served for two years as minister for youth at First Methodist Church, Santa Ana, Calif. He is a graduate of the University of Redlands and of the Boston University School of Theology.

Last fall Rev. DON E. SMUCKER *joined the af*filiated faculties of Bethany Biblical Seminary and the Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Chicago, as instructor in biblical theology. He has held pastorates in Wadsworth, Ohio, and Lancaster, Pa. He has also served as executive secretary of the Kansas Institute of International Relations under the American Friends Service Committee and as midwest secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. He received his theological training at Yale, Oberlin and Princeton.

A son of the manse, Rev. ERNEST MARSHALL HOWSE had his first pastorate at the Presbyterian Church in Beverly Hills, Calif.; in 1935 he went to Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, where he still ministers. Before his ordination to the ministry he spent a year teaching in North Newfoundland, three years as a home missionary along the Newfoundland coast, and four summers as a student missionary in Canada. For several years he has been staff correspondent for the *Christian Century*. He holds an S.T.M. degree from Union Seminary, New York, and a Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh.

Rev. ROBERT S. STEEN is minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Royal Oak, Mich.

Rev. JAMES C. PERKINS is minister of Union Congregational Church, Phoenix, Ariz.

Rev. ROY A. WILSON is minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Sigourney, Iowa.

TITLES AND TEXTS ☆ WHAT PULPIT READERS ARE PREACHING ABOUT

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, First Presbyterian, Pittsburgh, Pa. "The Dayspring from on High." Acts 27:29—". . . and wished for the day." Ps. 130:6—"More than they that watch for the morning."

MURRAY A. FIGG, First Methodist, Carrollton, O. "Our Unclaimed Legacy." John 14:27—"My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

S. C. DICKENSON, Eaton, Colo. "Laying Hold on the Greatness of God." Ps. 104:1—"O Jehovah, my God, thou art very great."

RICHARD P. MALLERY, First Church of Kew Gardens, New York. "The Victory of Love." I Cor. 13:8—"Love never ends." (R. S. V.)

JAMES C. PERKINS, Union Congregational, Phoenix, Ariz. "Marks of Christian Maturity." I Cor. 14:20—"Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; be babes in evil, but in thinking be mature." (R. S. V.)

JOHN W. MEISTER, First Presbyterian, Sidney, O. "The Frontier of the Kingdom of God." Phil. 3:20—"We are a colony of heaven." (Moffatt)

S. L. CULWELL, First Methodist, Rosebud, Tex. "The High Cost of Cheap Living." Isa. 55:2—"Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?"

FREDERICK B. MORLEY, Methodist, Woodhaven, N. Y. "Enriched Living." John 10:10—"I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

REUBEN H. GROSS, Edgeboro Moravian, Bethlehem, Pa. "Spiritual Inventory." Gen. 41:49—"And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering." I Tim. 6:18-19—"They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous, thus laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed."

WAYNE W. WITTE, First Presbyterian, Englishtown, N. J. "On Being a Happy Nation." Deut. 33:29—"Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

EUGENE M. AUSTIN, Baptist Temple, Charleston, W. Va. "Bartered Heritage." Jer. 2:11—"My people hath changed their glory for that which doth not profit."

CLAYTON R. MAUD, First Welsh Baptist, Scranton, Pa. "The Unconverted Disciple." Luke 22:32—". . . and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

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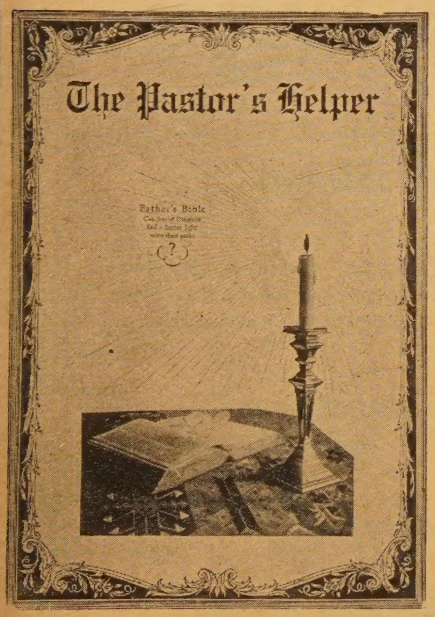

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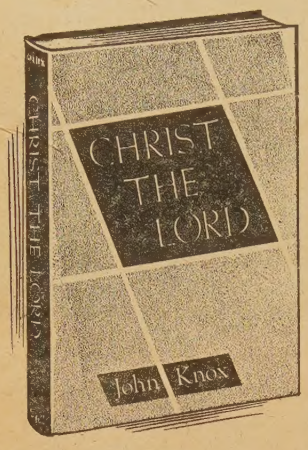

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